

RuralAmerica

USDA/ERS • Volume 17, Issue 1 • Spring 2002

Douglas E. Bowers, Executive Editor
Carolyn Rogers, Associate Editor
Dale Simms, Managing Editor
Victor B. Phillips, Jr., Layout and Design

Rural America (ISSN 0271-2171) is published four times per year by USDA's Economic Research Service.

Rural America welcomes letters to the editor as well as ideas for articles. Address editorial correspondence and inquiries to the Executive Editor, *Rural America*, ERS-FRED, Room 2171, 1800 M Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036-5831; or call 202-694-5398.

Contents of this magazine may be reprinted without permission, but the editors would appreciate acknowledgment of such use and an advance copy of the material to be reprinted. Opinions expressed within do not necessarily represent the policies of USDA. Use of commercial and trade names does not imply approval or constitute endorsement by USDA.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call 202-720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal employment opportunity provider and employer.

Contents

Feature Articles

- 2** Electric Market Restructuring:
Issues for Rural America
Constance Newman
- 12** Small Town Development in China:
A 21st Century Challenge
Fred Gale and Hongguo Dai
- 20** Economic Strain and Community Concerns
in Three Meatpacking Communities
Rochelle L. Dalla, Sheran Cramer, and Kaye Stanek
- 26** Expenditures on Children by Rural Families
Mark Lino

Rural Updates

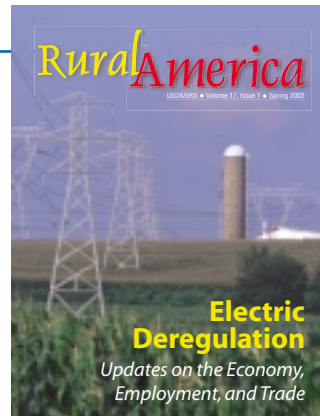
- 34** Macroeconomic Trends:
*U.S. Economy in Recovery, Although Rural Areas
Still Affected by Recession*
David A. Torgerson and Karen S. Hamrick
- 40** Employment and Unemployment:
*Rural Employment Turned Down in 2001 as
Unemployment Continued to Climb*
Lorin Kusmin
- 42** Food and Fiber System Employment
and Value Added:
Food and Fiber System Important Part of Economy
William Edmondson
- 45** Economic Activity Triggered by Food
and Agricultural Trade:
*Food and Agricultural Exports Increased in 2000 at a
Greater Rate Than Imports, Reversing 5-Year Trend*
William Edmondson



RuralAmerica
ISSN 0271-2171 • Volume 17, Issue 1 • Spring 2002

On the cover:

*Electric power lines over corn fields.
Photo courtesy Grant Heilman Photography, Inc.*



**Electric
Deregulation**
Updates on the Economy,
Employment, and Trade